

**Standard 3-4: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the events that led to the Civil War, the course of the War and Reconstruction, and South Carolina's role in these events.**

**3.4.2** Summarize the institution of slavery prior to the Civil War, including reference to conditions in South Carolina, the invention of the cotton gin, subsequent expansion of slavery, and economic dependence on slavery. (H, E, P)

**Taxonomy Level:** B 2 Understand / Conceptual Knowledge

**Previous/future knowledge:**

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, students have previously learned about the transfer of the institution of slavery from the West Indies, the slave trade, and the developing plantation economy (3-2.7). Students also compared the conditions of daily life for various classes of people in South Carolina, including the elite, the middle class, the lower class, the independent farmers, and the free and the enslaved African Americans (3-4.1).

In the 4th grade, students will learn more about the introduction and establishment of slavery in the New World and the role of the slave trade (4-2.5), the impact of slavery on life in the New World and the contributions of slaves (4-2.6), the effects of the American Revolution on slaves and how the war affected attitudes about slavery and contributed to the abolition of slavery in some state constitutions (4-3.7), specific legislation and events affecting slavery in the territories (4-5.7), and how sectionalism fueled by the issue of slavery lead to war (4-6.3).

In 7th grade, students will study European colonial power and its effect on African nations and the slave trade (7-1.4).

In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students will further study the importance of slavery to the plantation system and history of settlement (8-1.3), the origins of African American slaves and the growth of the slave trade (8-1.4), how South Carolina used human resources to gain economic prosperity (8-1.6), the importance of agriculture in antebellum South Carolina and the dependence on slavery (8-3.1). Students will also learn about the impact of the cotton gin (8-3.1).

In United States History and Constitution, students will compare the social and cultural characteristics of the North, the South, and the West during the antebellum period, including the lives of African Americans and social reform movements such as abolition and women's rights (USHC-4.1).

**It is essential for students to know**

The geography of South Carolina, including the climate, soil conditions, and topography supported growing cotton. The institution of **slavery** and the plantation system were originally established by the early English settlers who brought the institution with them from Barbados (3-2.7). Slavery was also supported by the social class system (3-4.1) of South Carolina. The elite class who controlled the government encouraged the practice of slavery in order to support their lifestyle, economic situation and social and political position.

After the Revolutionary War, Northern states passed laws to gradually free their slaves; however, the plantation owning political elite in South Carolina did not support such laws. The institution of slavery became stronger as a result of the invention of the **cotton gin** by Eli Whitney [1793]. By making it easier to pick the seed from the short boll cotton, the cotton gin made cotton a profitable cash crop for all parts of South Carolina. Some students mistakenly think that because it was faster to take the seed out of the boll, less slave labor was needed. It is important that students understand that the cotton gin led to the **expansion of slavery**. Planters soon increased profits by increasing the production of cotton which

required more slave labor to plant, chop (hoe) and pick the cotton. Planters bought additional slaves and were less likely to free any of their slaves, continuing the cycle of exploitation of African Americans.

As the cultivation of cotton grew, cotton became increasingly important to the economy of South Carolina and South Carolinians became increasingly **dependent on slave labor**. Many smaller independent farmers, because of increased profits due to the cotton gin, also became slave owners. Like the larger plantations, they too became dependent on the slaves to keep up the increased production of cotton on their farms. More slaves equaled more money, regardless of the size of the farm. As a result of the increased production of cotton, cotton farmers sought more land farther west and the institution of slavery was spread with the cultivation of new cotton fields.

**It is not essential for students to know** about the fluctuations of the cotton market brought about by increased production, the differences in types of cotton, how to grow cotton, or the negative impact on the soil of agricultural practices of this time period. They do not need to understand how the cotton gin works.

**Assessment guidelines:**

Appropriate assessments would require students to **summarize** the institution of slavery prior to the Civil War. Students should be able to generalize the main points in the description of slavery and the effects of economic dependence on slavery and also to generalize how the invention of the cotton gin related to the expansion of slavery. Appropriate assessments should also require students to **identify** specific changes that were a result of the invention of the cotton gin; or **compare** the economy of South Carolina before and after the invention of the cotton gin